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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 8 December 2011 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

This is our second letter to you in the past 24 hours, aimed at drawing attention to the illegal and provocative actions being taken by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Israel's military aggression and colonization and its continuous provocations and incitement against the Palestinian people are heightening tensions on the ground, threatening to seriously destabilize the situation. This requires urgent redress by the international community, which must act to implement the rule of law and bring a halt to the gross violations being perpetrated by Israel against the Palestinian people. The prospects for peace are contingent on such collective legal, political and moral action, including by the Security Council.

In yet another condemnable display of defiance, yesterday the Israeli Government announced an additional 14 more settlement units to be built in Occupied East Jerusalem in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Ras Al-Amud, as well as the seizure of 150 dunums of Palestinian agricultural lands in the town of Khadir, south of Bethlehem. The occupying Power also issued demolition orders for 14 Palestinian homes in the village of Susiya in southern Al-Khalil (Hebron). Moreover, it has been reported that this week the occupying Power will complete the construction of the Wall around the Shufaat refugee camp in Occupied East Jerusalem. The completion of this illegal Wall will totally isolate and entrap the 45,000 refugees in the camp, who will only be allowed to enter or exit the camp through one checkpoint, forced to go through it even to access the rest of their own City. We must thus reiterate: the destructive impact of Israel's illegal settlement campaign in all its manifestations is massive, on the ground, on the prospects for credible peace negotiations, and on the viability of the two-State solution on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

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Unquestionably, Israel's illegal colonization of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is gravely impairing the contiguity, the integrity and the viability of the Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. The impact on Occupied East Jerusalem as a result of policies and measures specifically targeting the City is most intense. In addition to home demolitions, evictions and illegal excavations of religious sites in the Holy City, the occupying Power has "ordered" the closure within a week of a wooden access ramp to the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, the third holiest site in Islam. In this regard, it should be noted that Al-Magharbah Gate is one of the main entrances to Al-Aqsa Mosque and that it is the responsibility of the Islamic Waqf to restore the ramp as is needed. This latest Israeli decision can be seen only as an attempt to further entrench control over and alter the character and identity of Occupied East Jerusalem, in clear violation of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, including those adopted by the Security Council.

In addition to the above, over the past 24 hours, Israeli settlers have continued their rampage of terror in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In the West Bank town of Nablus, Israeli settlers fired at Palestinian shepherds near Yanun village, and in Asira Al-Qibliya settlers surrounded a house, stoned and vandalized it, smashing its windows, and threw paint on its walls. It must be recalled that Israel's illegal settlement drive and the settlers are funded, protected and armed by the Israeli Government, which has transferred and enabled them to live in these illegal settlements in grave breach of international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention, and which allows them to commit such crimes against defenceless Palestinians with absolute impunity. The lawlessness of the settlers, including deadly violence, terror, harassment and intimidation against Palestinian civilians and their properties, is facilitated, aided and abetted by the occupying Power, which bears full responsibility for the settlers' illegal presence and all of their illegal actions.

At the same time, for the second day in a row, the occupying Power continued its military assaults against the Gaza Strip, killing, injuring and spreading fear among the 1.5 million civilians living there. Today, an Israeli airstrike on a car near a crowded park in downtown Gaza City killed two Palestinians, one of whom was nearly decapitated and the others whose body was dismembered. In addition to the trauma caused to those who witnessed this barbaric attack, five bystanders were injured as a result, some seriously.

The international community has a direct legal and moral responsibility to ensure the protection of the Palestinian civilian population under Israel's occupation and to ensure that all parties adhere to their responsibilities in the Charter and as outlined in relevant United Nations resolutions. The Security Council in specific must uphold its duties in this regard and take serious action to hold Israel accountable for all of its violations. We thus reiterate our call upon the international community to give due attention to the grave situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to ensure that timely measures and action be undertaken to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to halt completely all its illegal and aggressive policies against the Palestinian people and their land, including settlement expansion and settler violence, extrajudicial executions, excessive and lethal force against Palestinians and home demolitions, and to finally commit to the pursuit of peace, if we are to have any chance to salvage the two-State solution.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 412 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 7 December 2011 (A/ES-10/540-S/2011/761) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feda Abdelhady **Nasser**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.